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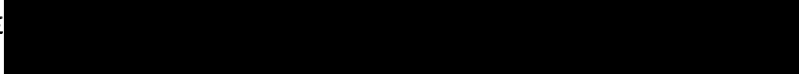
COUNTRY Austria

REPORT NO. 

TOPIC Ernst Fischer's Comment on the Political Situation

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EVALUATION 

DATE OF CONTE 

DATE OBTAINED 


REFERENCES

PAGES 2 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

REMARKS

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2. Fischer believes that the propagandistic and political effort of Soviet foreign policy has shifted to a consolidation of the Berlin-Leipzig-Prague-Vienna area, with the German element in that area playing the leading role. The Soviets realize that, because of their deep-rooted nationalistic feeling, the Slav populations of the border countries have proven themselves unreliable disciples of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Accordingly, the Soviets are faced with the necessity of increasingly utilizing the German people who, on the basis of their previous National-Socialistic indoctrination by the state, lend themselves well to successful Bolshevik indoctrination. Therefore, the Austrian problem, as such, will never play a significant role in Soviet foreign policy, because it holds only a subordinate position within the larger area complex.
  3. Referring to the above-mentioned Soviet plans for Germany, Schueller pointed out that, in Prague, Communist functionaries of German nationality have already intrenched themselves to such an extent that the Czechs have virtually ceased to exercise leadership in their own party. \*
  4. Fischer admitted that nationalistic elements in Austria until now have not been very susceptible to Communist Party propaganda. This condition may have been caused by the reports of returning PWs, which greatly handicapped Communist propaganda

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Document No. <u>82-00457R005400730009-7</u>
Classification <u>CONFIDENTIAL</u>
Declassify on: <u>NO CHANGE IN CLASS.</u>
Class. Changed To: <u>TS S C</u>
Auth: <u>FOR TLP</u>
Date: <u>8-30-78</u> By: <u>35</u>

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activity. However, if the Soviets adhere to their policy of assigning Germany a leading role, Fischer sees a possibility of winning support of the nationalistic elements in the Soviet Zone of Austria for the new concept of Europe. Fischer said that the forthcoming developments in the Soviet Zone of Germany will also have an advantageous effect on Austria. A future task will be to bring about meetings of the nationalistic elements in the western zones of Austria with national elements of the Soviet Zone of Germany, from which Communist party functionaries will remain aloof.

5. Fischer also asserted that the Cominform is little pleased with the Communist Party activities in Upper Austria, particularly because it is of utmost importance in that area to undermine the precarious political position of the United States by steady agitation and propaganda. The limited freedom of action enjoyed by the Communist Party branch in Salzburg makes it more imperative that such activities be emphasized.

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Comment. Schueler's statement that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is controlled by functionaries of German nationality cannot be verified. It is known, however, that the following Czechoslovakia-born Germans hold key positions in the Communist Party of Austria: Ernst Fischer, from Komotau; Erwin Zucker-Schilling, from Aussig; and Gruenberg, (fnu), manager of the communist globus publishing house.

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